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LETTER DATED 5 SEPTEMBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BURUNDI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In confirmation of my oral briefing on 5 September 1996, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the memorandum outlining the programme which the Government of Burundi proposes to undertake during the transitional period, as it was communicated to the States of the Great Lakes region and to President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere in his capacity as mediator.

The projected programme comprises four main objectives: restoration of the Burundian State; dialogue with the armed factions; organization of a national debate; establishment of a National Assembly composed of all its former members as well as other members. Consultations have already begun to that end. The programme also envisages the return of political parties to the national arena. They will be required to abide by the law governing such parties since 1992 and by the code of conduct for political parties.

The programme undertaken by the Government shows clearly that it is determined to adhere to priorities consistent with resolution 1072 (1996) adopted on 30 August 1996 by the Security Council. The Government takes this opportunity to reiterate the proposal which it made to the President of the Security Council in August 1996, namely that the report of the International Commission of Inquiry should be made official and transmitted to the accredited Burundian authorities.

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request you to have the annexed memorandum circulated as an official document to all the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) NSANZE TERENCE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Memorandum

On the basis of the Declaration of 25 July 1996, the Government of the Republic of Burundi has just communicated to the countries of the subregion and to the designated mediator, President Julius Nyerere, the following clarifications regarding the peace and security programme which Burundi is submitting to the countries of the subregion in particular, and the international community in general.

I. DURATION OF THE TRANSITION

We confirm the transitional nature of the regime installed on 25 July 1996. The duration of this regime will be three years, depending on the pace at which our agenda is implemented. The transitional period might be shorter. This flexibility is dictated by realism, because of the implementation of such programmes as the dialogue with the armed factions and the national debate, the duration of which cannot be firmly established at the outset.

II. TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME

A. Restoration of the Burundian State

The disorder resulting from the crisis since 1993 has profoundly destabilized the State. In order to put an end to that situation, we undertake, inter alia:

(a) To improve discipline within the defence and security forces; to restore the work ethic by imposing discipline at all levels, with the focus on young people;

(b) To prevent perpetrators from enjoying impunity. Impunity has had a devastating effect on our society. In order to put an end to that situation, we intend to begin measures such as the following in the next few days: (i) trial of persons implicated in the coup d'état of 21 October 1993; (ii) trial of persons implicated in the ethnic massacres following the coup d'état of 21 October 1993. In this connection, we reiterate our request to the United Nations to publish and transmit to us the report of the International Commission of Inquiry.

B. Dialogue with the armed factions

We reconfirm here our readiness to initiate a dialogue with all the armed factions, on condition that they cease to massacre innocent people and that they renounce the ideology of genocide.

C. Organization of a national debate

This debate will bring together all Burundians, of all ethnic groups and all political tendencies, without exception. It will focus on fundamental questions, such as security, justice and the establishment of institutions in accordance with the wishes and interests of all Burundians. At the end of this debate, a new Constitution and new institutions will be put in place.

D. Transitional institutions

1. The National Assembly

As from the next session, all the members of the present National Assembly will resume business as usual, without any impediment.

In view of the difficulties noted earlier which affected the credibility of this institution, we are going to include other members, in consultation with the present National Assembly, according to procedures to be determined by mutual agreement.

The National Assembly will play a fundamental role in controlling the executive and conducting the national debate.

The form to be taken by the enlarged National Assembly cannot be predicted during this transitional period; the Assembly will begin its work when the process of consultation is over.

Needless to say, the members of the National Assembly will continue to enjoy, without interruption, the material and other benefits deriving from their status.

2. Political parties

Political parties will resume activities within three months. However, the parties must abide by the law governing them since 1992 and by a code of conduct to be formulated in the interim, in consultation with all the parties concerned. This is in order to avoid repeating the painful experience endured during the implementation of the Convention on Governance; during the Mwanza talks, special mention was made of the lack of political realism in that process.

3. The international community

The international community in general and the countries of the subregion in particular have constantly demonstrated their determination to see Burundi emerge from the crisis.

We reiterate our desire to collaborate with the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the countries of the subregion and the designated mediator, namely President Julius Nyerere.

In this connection, we hope that the international community and in particular the countries of the subregion will send observers to Burundi to witness the restoration of peace and security, and to let the world know about the perpetrators of human rights violations, as appropriate.

We should like consultations to resume within the next few days, with a view to having a tangible expression of solidarity, as soon as possible, among all those interested in a solution to the Burundian crisis.

This, then, is a condensed version of the programme of the Republic of Burundi, for which it requests the support of the international community.